

NEW COLD WAR: REBUILDING PAKISTAN RUSSIA RELATIONS

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Abstract

This paper explores Pakistan and Russia building relations at the backdrop of New Cold War in the South Asia. It argues and justifies that competing and rival groups in the present international system are forcing states to build new alliances. Hence, Pakistan's new collaborative strategy of allying itself with Russia is due to several political and economic developments amongst its immediate neighbors in the region. While Russia, a former super power is trying to revive its role in the region is also looking for new partners with converging interests to deal with its security issues at home. Both states can benefit from the new partnership if they properly use their strength and capabilities in the region. The article also argues that how certain changes are forcing both Pakistan and Russia to revisit their foreign policies, thus indicating a beginning of the "New Cold War" in the South Asia.

Key Words: South Asia, New Alliances, Foreign Policies and New Cold War

Introduction

There are no eternal friends or foes in international relations. States interests' converge and diverge depending on the world order and the prevailing situation. Once upon a time, building better bilateral relations with Russia was a challenge for Pakistan, however today's global realities and compulsions have forced Russia to get closer to its old foe. In addition, certain political developments are indicating towards building a New Cold

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War in the world. The most important is the recent withdrawal of the United States' government from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty that resulted in tearing existing accords and has paved the way for launching a new nuclear arms race.¹ The Russo-Western tensions in Ukraine and Georgia translate into proxy wars, revisiting the Cold War rivalries of the 1970s and 1980s between the former Soviet Union and United States.² Both actors are waging war against each other through its proxies and are looking for allies in different regions of Asia. In South Asia, Pakistan used and abused in the War against Terror (WoT), is left in the lurch by the United States at the time of economic crises and is now looking for new friends. In this situation, Pakistan can prove itself an important ally if Russia wants to revive and assert its role in the region. In addition, it would be easier for Moscow to seek support from Islamabad as Pakistan is in the process of seeking new partners to taper off reliance on the West and the United States.

It is understandable that both Russia and Pakistan are weary of United States policies in the region. The United States' growing ties with India including all-inclusive economic relations and cooperation in the field of defense has exasperated Pakistan. Moreover, the United States has displayed an unpredictable demanding attitude towards Pakistan after years of cooperation on the WoT. Russia's situation is more critical with the United States, after losing several of its republics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is now striving to depose the United States from its policing position in the region. In addition, Russia's old ally and friend India has started purchasing arms from the United States, thus replacing Russian arms and ammunition with American ones. This situation and change in loyalties has forced both Pakistan and Russia to get closer. Building Pak-Russia relations is a significant development in the region too. While the Indian economy and market is a major attraction for the world including Russia, Pakistan's growing relations with the former super power has greater prospects in realizing the security objectives of both states. It is pertinent to mention that security concerns of Russia and Pakistan are so huge that it has adversely affected their economies.

¹ Daryl Kimball, "The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at a Glance | Arms Control Association," accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty>.

² Rupert Cornwell, "Proxy Wars and Provocations: Relations between Russia and the US Are Chilling" *The Independent*, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/proxy-wars-and-provocations-relations-between-russia-and-the-us-are-chilling-a6997526.html>.

Theoretical Paradigm

Pakistan and Russia's relations can be analyzed in the light of realist theory. Presently, both states have some serious security concerns and converging interests in the region. In the anarchic global politics, states' interests and policies fluctuate with such an amazing pace that sometimes it transforms strategic alliances into discord and in many instances unites traditional foes. As Henry John Temple Palmerstone remarked during the House of Commons session on March 1, 1848, "we have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and it is our duty to follow such interests". Therefore, to safeguard its state interests, Pakistan, while on the defensive, is discarding its traditional hostility towards Russia and has initiated its alliance-building efforts through different pacts and agreements.³ In addition, Pakistan's hostile history with India and border cum militancy related issues with Afghanistan forced its policy makers to keep evolving its strategy in the region.

At the onset of the New Cold War, certain states are formulating their policies with calculated risks and threats emanating from their internal and external environments. Consequently, Pakistan is now seeking an alliance with Russia to ensure the defense of its state and control terrorism. In alliances, defense collaboration amongst the states is multifaceted phenomenon that comprises complex sets of outcomes and effects. In the case of Pakistan, the primary intention behind its defense collaboration with Russia is not only building favorable strategic conditions but also to uphold and reduce its obligations in dealing with the several international terrorist groups stationed in the region through collective efforts. Therefore, such joint efforts would include arms transfers, military exercises and other relevant programs. All such defense pacts would need to be favorable for both states that are dealing with terrorism regionally and internationally. Although there is an asymmetry in the power balance between Pakistan and Russia, the partnership will have its significance in both security and economic fields as long as there are no other strings attached to it.

³ Naveed, Arooj, "Outlining Pakistan's Regional Challenges in The 21st Century," *South Asian Voices*, September 16, 2015, <https://southasianvoices.org/outlining-pakistans-regional-challenges-in-the-21st-century/>.

Old foes turning friends and strategic partners might be confusing to many if changes related to security, economics and politics in the region are not assessed. Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan, Mr. Alexey Y. Dedov, mentioned that in the given circumstances it is inevitable for both Pakistan and Russia to develop combined defense capabilities to fight terrorism in the region.⁴ Therefore, several economic and defense pacts have been signed between the two countries to address their immediate needs and interests in the region. Moreover, the New Cold War in the making is more dangerous and un-predictable as it not only manifests as ‘chill’ (the armaments race) but also as outright ‘hot wars’ in different parts of Asia, such as the Syrian Civil War being more of proxy war between United States and Russia resulting in both powers supporting different militant groups in Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. In addition, NATO’s hostile policy towards Russia in the region is alarming too.⁵ Pakistan, in such a situation of international anarchy is facing political, economic and security problems and trying to evolve strategies to deal with all the chaos happening around its backyard. Let us not ignore that several militant outfits from Central Asia and the Middle East are also interfering and supporting militant groups in Pakistan.

In international relations, it is essential for the survival of a state to have self-defense, economic security and wield power to control others’ intrusions. In addition, due to the absence of an effective order or a body to regulate the behavior of other (aggressive) states, it is essential for a state to enhance its power and mechanisms of self-defense.⁶ Thus, it is important for a state like Pakistan to have power in its international dealings. For many states, the only unailing form of power is the military strength required for its self-preservation. Therefore, many states blaming the present international system try to seek power and protect themselves through military force and aggressive strategies. Hence, as realist theorists’ arguments revolve around power and international anarchy, their focus of discussion is that international anarchy forces states to struggle for power and search for alliances with the kinds of converging interests as we see in the case of Pakistan and Russia.⁷

⁴ Mr. Alexey Y. Dedov, “Russian Position on Afghanistan and Syria” (May 12, 2016).

⁵ Jeremy Shapiro and Miriam R. Estrin, “The Proxy War Problem in Syria,” *Brookings* (blog), February 4, 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-proxy-war-problem-in-syria/>.

⁶ Karpowicz-Korab, Julian, W., “Political Realism in International Relations,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/realism-intl-relations>.

⁷ Mearsheimer, John J., “Structural Realism,” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

According to the popular realist's view, primary actors in international relations are states and their main goal is security and protection of their national interests; hence they struggle for power to preserve their national and international interests.⁸ In an anarchic environment, the state pursues and defends such interests in its given capability and to its best-calculated judgment. Thus, due to the absence of a consistent and reliable reconciliation process amongst states, force is an available means of achieving its external ends that increase anarchy.⁹ However the realists, while discussing anarchy and protecting states' interests, are divided on several issues. The main discourse is that why do some states (e.g., the United States and Russia) want power. The classical realist Hans Morgenthau argues in his work *Politics Among Nations* that "it is the nature of every human to exercise some amount of power and since great powers (states) are also governed by the humans, hence, they want their state to have dominating position in their interaction with other states."¹⁰

However, the structural realists' view varies from the classical realists', that they believe that human nature does not strive for power but in the anarchic system, it is essential for the state as an entity to acquire power for survival and protection of its varied interests. They argue that the drive behind the desire for acquiring power is the anarchic structure of the international system.¹¹ John Herz, a structural theorist, coined the concept of 'security dilemma' and explains, "it is the international anarchy that assures the centrality of the struggle for power even in the absence of aggressiveness or similar factors."¹² Thus, many argue that the states attaining power is directly proportional to the security problems. In the anarchic international system, powers of several states (e.g., the United States and Russia) are unchecked, hence creating an uncertain environment of insecurity for many

⁸ Karpowicz-Korab, Julian, W., "Political Realism in International Relations," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/realism-intl-relations>.

⁹ Keohane, Robert O., "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism & Beyond," in *Neorealism & Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

¹⁰ Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics among Nations*, 1948.

¹¹ Mearsheimer, John J., "Structural Realism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹² Beer, Francis a. and Hariman, Robert, *Post -Realism The Rhetorical Turn In International Relations* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1996).

other states such as Pakistan. Therefore, the decision of many states acquiring power is justified with the objective to defend itself against the powerful states' potential attack and aggressiveness.¹³

There are two different groups within structural realism too, defensive and offensive. The defensive realists see anarchy as the main reason behind states' behavior of engaging in self-help mechanisms of defense like Pakistan. Many states fearing the absence or reduction of security in the international system resort to taking steps by maximizing their security and power; therefore, in many instances they mitigate the policies of other states' security apparatuses. Given the security problems in the regional sub-system, structural modifiers refer to the relative distribution of capabilities that enable individual states to carry out particular diplomatic and military strategies.¹⁴ According to Kenneth Waltz, many states in the international and regional sub-systems are struggling for maximization of their power. Hence, maximization of power is pertinent to the states' survival in the international order, which is devoid of a global leviathan to give them any protection.¹⁵ He also argues that while every state is an autonomous, sovereign and equal political unit, however it must rely on its own resources to realize its political and security interests in such an anarchic environment.¹⁶

The majority of states, due to security concerns, are also forced to compete with each other for power in the international system and sometimes in the regional sub-arrangements too. These states define power with security, however beyond certain limits; they avoid achieving relative advantage over others, fearing that it will escalate competition for power amongst the states or motivate them to join in alliances against each other. Thus, the balance of power system in international politics is an inevitable consequence of the anarchical structure. Many form alliances with weaker states to neutralize the dominant powers and to balance power in the international system. In many instances, the primary concern of such states is not the maximization of power but maintaining a balancing position in the system.¹⁷ Hence, interaction and alliances between international entities can

¹³ Mearsheimer, John J., "Structural Realism," 2013.

¹⁴ Taliaferro, Jeffrey W., "Security Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited," *International Security* 25, no. 03 (Winter -2001 2000).

¹⁵ Pashakhanlou, Arash Heydarian, "Comparing and Contrasting Classical Realism and Neorealism," *E-International Relations Students*, July 23, 2009, <http://www.e-ir.info/2009/07/23/comparing-and-contrasting-classical-realism-and-neo-realism/>.

¹⁶ Donnelly, Jack, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Sutch, Peter and Elias, Juanita, *The Basic International Relations* (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007).

be seen through the lens of power capacity of each state in international politics. Alliances are used both as a device of balancing power and enhancing security; presently, we can see that the United States is trying to balance its power in South Asia and warming towards India. At the same time, Russia is trying to enhance its security by establishing military relations with Pakistan. Waltz analyzed two features of alliances: state entering into alliance to balance against the other state's power and other enhancing its powers through military alliance.¹⁸

Unlike defensive realists, offensive are slightly radical in defining international anarchy. They believe that anarchy in the international system is Hobbesian and there is no restraining power over states. Some security exists but only either in the bipolar arrangements or in the form of nuclear deterrence. Thus, many states try to attain security by maximizing their relative advantage within given framework of the power relationship. Offensive realists observe that such behavior of the state is relative to its capabilities and its external environment. Moreover, all such factors are also translated quite smoothly into state's foreign policy and shaping its interests in different regions such as Pakistan.¹⁹ To them war is inevitable and possibility in such anarchic situation where power shifts constantly and uncertainly. Therefore, it is essential for the states' survival to maximize their power in such situation, and must be on guard, pay attention to the shifting powers, interests in world order and must be ready to gain advantages. In such anarchic world, the hegemonic status of a state can guarantee survival.²⁰ Russia is in the process of balancing power with United States and its allies as well trying to enhance its power with military pacts, consequently changing its policies and relations in the region.

Russia Revisiting its Foreign Policy in the Region

During the Cold War, Russia maintained intimate relations with India, which affected its relations with Pakistan. However, the end of the Cold War

¹⁸ Patricia, Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponent of Peace, Weapons of War* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004).

¹⁹ Schweller, Randall L., "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Under Balancing," *International Security* 29, no. 02 (Fall 2004).

²⁰ Paul, T. V., Wirtz, James J., and Fortmann, Michel, *Balance of Power: Theory & Practice in the 21st Century* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004).

drastically changed the status of Russia and its political and economic influence in the world. The multi-polarity restructured the world politics and economics too, thus forcing Russia to devise a strategy to revive its old position. It is observed that the position of Russia was challenged in its former republics that led to confrontation with the West, somehow renewing (new) Cold War with different policy and alliances. The unfortunate crises of Ukraine and Crimean followed by the sanctions and skirmishes devastated its economy.²¹ Apart from these developments, the Chechen rebels, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria challenged its security, therefore, Pakistan, a South Asia Gatekeeper and fighting a war against terror is considered as an important ally.

Russia is monitoring several changes in the region too. The entry of Pakistan in the nuclear club altered the geopolitics of South Asia. Russia observed the recent denouement of ideological Pakistan-United States traditional alliance and emerging United States-India partnership in the region. These new changes were expected with the end of Cold War and if we analyze these changes in the light of realists' theories, the states' changing policies are not tantamount to the expression of detachment from the traditional alliances; rather, it is an indication of evolving relations and unrelentingly promoting their national interests. India feels that alliance with Russian will no more serve its interest in the region, specifically in Afghanistan, hence it is moving out from the orbit of the East and getting closer to the West. For Russia, Pakistan is a 'South Asian Gatekeeper'; therefore, it is trying to devise its policies based on broad-spectrum ties with an important state that is linking the gigantic economies of Eurasia, Iran, South Asia and China for the revival of its economy, and also it will be an ideal partner in curbing terrorism.²² Therefore, it is pertinent to discuss Russia's economic, political and security concerns that changed its foreign policy.

a. Economic Concerns of Russia

Russia after the end of the Cold War struggled with Glasnost and Perestroika reforms. It is now trying to recover its economy while sitting on the pile of arms and ammunition. However, the instability and shift of alliances in the region affected Russia's economic ambitions tied to its arms sale too. During the Cold War, the major importers of Russian arms and ammunition were India, Vietnam, China, Syria, Algeria, Iran, Myanmar and

²¹ Korybko, Andrew, "Pakistan Is The 'Zipper' Of Pan-Eurasian Integration," *Russian Institute for Strategic Studies*, November 15, 2015, <https://en.riss.ru/analysis/18882/>.

²² Korybko, Andrew, "Pakistan Is The 'Zipper' Of Pan-Eurasian Integration," *Russian Institute for Strategic Studies*, November 15, 2015, <https://en.riss.ru/analysis/18882/>.

Egypt.²³ Nevertheless, the end of Cold War and onset of New Cold War opened the markets for many of its old trading partners, thus adversely affecting the arms trade of Russia. The striking development was the lifting of US arm embargo from Vietnam that dramatically changed the US-Vietnam relations and it prompted Vietnam to purchase defense equipment from the new markets.²⁴ Similarly, Myanmar diversified its military relations with the Western states after US lifted sanctions against it, which is another serious setback to the Russia's arms sale.²⁵ Similarly, economic crisis in Venezuela also proved detrimental to Russian arms. The poor economic growth in Venezuela resulted in the food shortages and unemployment, thus making it impossible for it to continue its armament and purchase of military equipment from Russia.²⁶ In addition, Syria a long trusted Arab ally located at the confluence of Middle East and Europe, rife with deadly civil war, forced Russia to intervene. It provided its forces and military equipment to Syria to curb the insurgency that resulted in huge loss of arm sale as Syria is not in any position to pay for the Russian military equipment on large scale.²⁷ Egypt's Arab Spring proved devastating for the Russia economy too as it has to contest not only with the United States but also with the other European states. Iran, a state slapped with the sanctions and involved in the Middle East conflict is moving closer to China due to certain compulsions in the region, therefore Russia is trying to compete with Chinese enthusiasm too.²⁸

²³ Pulipaka, Sanjay, "Russia's New Approach to Pakistan: All About Arms Sales," *The Diplomat*, September 28, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/russias-new-approach-to-pakistan-all-about-arms-sales/>.

²⁴ Prashanth Parameswara, "US-Vietnam Defense Relations: Problems and Prospects," *The Diplomat*, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/us-vietnam-defense-relations-problems-and-prospects/>.

²⁵ Kurlantzick, "The United States Begins Lifting Sanctions on Myanmar," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/united-states-begins-lifting-sanctions-myanmar>.

²⁶ "How Venezuela's Crisis Developed and Drove out Millions of People - BBC News," accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36319877>.

²⁷ Pulipaka, Sanjay, "Russia's New Approach to Pakistan: All About Arms Sales," September 28, 2016.

²⁸ Paul Stronski Ng Nicole and Paul Stronski Ng Nicole, "Cooperation and Competition: Russia and China in Central Asia, the Russian Far East, and the Arctic," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, accessed November 6, 2018,

With such developments, Russia is trying to secure back the old and new markets for its arms and ammunition. Pakistan surrounded by the hostile neighbors is the largest importer of American and Chinese defense equipment, however the recent turn of events in the region and shift of alliances forced the two states to collaborate. Hence, the interests of Russia and Pakistan converge on certain political issues in the region that brought them together on trade of arms too. Pakistan finds a new importer in the form of Russia, while Russia has a new market and an ally close to China in the form of Pakistan for its economic gains and political concerns.²⁹

b. Political Concerns of Russia

After the disintegration of USSR, Russia is strategizing greater Eurasia; however, it will be possible only if East is strengthened and stabilized. Therefore, Russia is holding meetings with Pakistan, China and Iran for the stability and security of Afghanistan. Russia spearheading meetings linked to regional security in the South Asia reflects its increasing pivot towards South Asia and ready to replace United States.³⁰ However, for affective implementation of any policy, Russia realizes that it needs a support of China and Pakistan in the South Asia. The recent civil nuclear deal between the India and United States opened a new debate in the South Asia and many security analysts are linking it with the mounting New Cold War. In addition, India growing role in Afghanistan also made Russia uneasy.³¹ Chinese position has grown stronger economically as well as strategically in the Asia while it also sees Russia as a potential partner against the United States' hegemony.³² Hence, it can be assessed that the timing is appropriate to form a nexus of which Russia can be an integral part. The Russian economy may be weak but its political acumen can benefit China. In this process of connecting to China, Pakistan can play an important role in

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/02/28/cooperation-and-competition-russia-and-china-in-central-asia-russian-far-east-and-arctic-pub-75673>.

²⁹ Pulipaka, Sanjay, "Russia's New Approach to Pakistan: All About Arms Sales," *The Diplomat*, September 28, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/russias-new-approach-to-pakistan-all-about-arms-sales/>.

³⁰ Kamran Yousaf, "Pakistan, Russia and China Inch Closer to Formal Alliance | The Express Tribune," accessed November 6, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1372490/pakistan-russia-china-inch-closer-formal-alliance/>.

³¹ James Griffiths, "Who Are the Key Players in Afghanistan?," CNN, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/26/asia/afghanistan-pakistan-india-china-russia-us/index.html>.

³² Khlebnikov, Alexey, "What Are the Major Security Threats for Russia in Eurasia?," *Russia Direct*, September 20, 2016, <http://www.russia-direct.org/debates/what-are-major-security-threats-russia-eurasia>.

bridging a gap between them. The New Cold War would be different from the old one, more deadly and competitive.

c. Security Concern of Russia

The evolving geopolitical realities have transformed the nature of threats faced by the Russia, emanating from Eurasia instead of the West. The fluctuating world order elevated the standings of China and Russia in regional settings. However, it is understandable that any attempt from either Russia or China to exploit these changes in the pursuit of their interests would be challenged by the West.³³ Consequently, Russia may face numerous threats and challenges to its security. Once a super power, the largest country of the region would be adversely affected by the uncalled changes happening around it. Therefore, policy planners in Russia, cognizant of such challenges and threats exhaling from changing world order are cautious and trying to find and adjust with new allies. Again United States and its Western allies would be the competitors in New Cold War, thus any face-off with them would lead to stern military and economic challenges. Therefore, it is trying to keep relations normal with the West to support its economy, its investment and have access to modern technology. However, Russia is facing a serious security threat from the Ukraine problem, which is based on Minsk Agreement.³⁴

Similarly, Russian insecurity stems from the Syria-Iraq issues in the Middle East and its connectivity with the Central Asia rebel groups too. It has become a party to the Syrian conflict to secure its turf from the United States and trying to contain the spill over of the militants to its region. In its backyard, the old wounds of Afghanistan are still bleeding and further aggravated with the extended stay of United States forces in the region. It is also cautious of the presence of violent group of Islamic State of Iraq and

³³ Sergey Karaganov, "The New Cold War and the Emerging Greater Eurasia," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 2 (July 2008).

³⁴ "Dialogue, Political Will Critical to Solving Crisis in Ukraine, Chairperson of Intergovernmental Organization Tells Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13241.doc.htm>.

Syria in the Central Asia too.³⁵ This terrorist group is becoming dangerous and expanding; hence, Russians feel the need that it should be tackled on the priority bases. In addition to all such security risks, the instability in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan has given birth to the drug economy too, which is threatening the whole region including Russia.³⁶

South Asia is a very complex region, comprising states having both internal and external conflicts, thus threatening the whole region and its surroundings. However, Russian strategists are observing it from different perspectives; they are monitoring China as emerging power in the region and watching that India is moving to the new North club. While Iran is trying to get acceptance with the West; however, it is also actively involved in the Middle East's conflict.³⁷ Consequently, Russia felt the need to form a regional mechanism and an ally that along with it manage the regional territorial conflicts. Russia has observed that China's ambitious project of "one belt one road", which passes through Central Asia, has irked India, West and the United States. It has been observed that several efforts to subvert the project have taken place as well. It is understandable that any act of destabilizing Central Asia would directly affect Russia too due to the connectivity and its shared history. Thus, the regional settings are folding and unfolding geopolitical realities and forcing Russia to revisit its foreign policy to tackle such security issues. In such circumstances, the ideal nexus would be with the Pakistan, which shared almost the similar security concerns in the region.³⁸

Pakistan Shifting Alliances and Changing its Policy in the Region

During the Cold War, South Asian geopolitics witnessed cordial ties between India and Russia, creating rift between Pakistan and Russia. This closeness also forced Pakistan to facilitate the capitalist block in the eviction

³⁵ Theodor Tudoroiu, "The Reciprocal Constitutive Features of a Middle Eastern Partnership: The Russian–Syrian Bilateral Relations" 6, no. 2 (July 2015).

³⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Afghan Narcotics: 2000-2018: From Control and Elimination Efforts to a Drug Economy and Bombings Labs," accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/afghan-narcotics-2000-2018-control-and-elimination-efforts-drug-economy-and-bombings-labs>.

³⁷ Khlebnikov, Alexey, "What Are the Major Security Threats for Russia in Eurasia?," September 20, 2016.

³⁸ Khlebnikov, Alexey, "What Are the Major Security Threats for Russia in Eurasia?," *Russia Direct*, September 20, 2016, <http://www.russia-direct.org/debates/what-are-major-security-threats-russia-eurasia>.

of former Soviet Union from its neighborhood in 1989.³⁹ However, the end of ideological wars between the two superpowers brought crucial changes in the old alliances and relationships. Moreover, the incident of 9/11 also transformed the international politics that further disturbed the ties of old trusted friends in the South Asia. Pakistan due to its geo-strategic position has to get on board with the United States in fighting War on Terror. However, Pak-US relations deteriorated due to growing distrust between them, which resulted in bitterness and accusations. Hence, it is observed that Pakistan's association with the capitalist block during the Cold War and post 9/11 has created several economic and security problems within the state.

United States encouragement with India in Afghanistan has annoyed both Russia and Pakistan. It is also a beginning of shifting interests and alliances in the region. The United States preference of India over Pakistan in Afghanistan has distanced the old allies of the Cold War and brought old foes together. Moreover, India signing different economic and military pact has disturbed its ties with Russia.⁴⁰ However, it is also observed that both China and Russia are not very happy with India's new evolving relations with the United States, which is threatening their economic and political interests. Pakistan's political and economic closeness with China is not an issue for Russians. Thus, in such scenario, Pakistan finds Russia a better partner to safeguard its economic, political and security concerns in the region and in the New Cold War.

a. Pakistan's Economic Concerns

A developing state like Pakistan is facing security problems coupled with serious issues such as population explosion, income inequality, environmental changes, and poorly managed resources. Similarly, in the realist world, there is strife among the powerful states for resources and market, hence the world is experiencing persistent power shift. Thus, today's

³⁹ Alan Taylor, "The Soviet War in Afghanistan, 1979 - 1989 - The Atlantic," accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/08/the-soviet-war-in-afghanistan-1979-1989/100786/>.

⁴⁰ Dr Moonis Ahmer, "The Growing Schism in Pak-US Relations - Daily Times," September 21, 2018, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/300822/the-growing-schism-in-pak-us-relations/>.

world is all about politics and economic development.⁴¹ It is also understandable that Pakistan is passing through an evolutionary phase and struggling with its economy due to several reasons. However, persistent security threat and political instability has adversely affected its economy and made the state dependent on the International Monetary Fund and other donor agencies. Unfortunately, since Pakistan's inception, governments are depending more on the foreign assistance (of one block) and are not paying attention to create conducive environment for the partnership investments to sustain its economy by utilization of available resources. Therefore, in such grim conditions, the only sustainable solution available is to revive our economy with the assistance of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and to start looking for more partners that can assist us.⁴²

Pakistan with CPEC has strengthened its relationship with China and has extended the courtesy to Russia too. It is a well-known fact that Russia and China are strategic partners and are part of BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.⁴³ Russia supported Pakistan's bid to become a part of Shanghai Cooperation as well. The notion of "Sino-Russian Belt and Union" with the Eurasian states (One Belt One Road and Eurasia) has floated amongst the regional powers and if materialized, it will change the power dynamics in the region and will benefit Pakistan. It is important to highlight that Russia is also interested in assisting Pakistan in exploring Thar Coal and is ready to invest 2 billion dollars for the construction of North South gas pipeline.⁴⁴ There are debates and diplomacy going on regarding Russia joining the economic alliance of China and Pakistan. It would be more productive for Pakistan if bilateral alliance (CPEC) is changed into multilateral, it will not only safeguard Pakistan's economic interests but will also address some of its security concerns too.⁴⁵ In addition, it is pertinent for Pakistan to counter economic alliances detrimental for its economic health in the region through partnerships and strong lobbying.

⁴¹ Bruce Vaughn et al., "Security and the Environment in Pakistan," August 3, 2010, 21.

⁴² Masood, Talat, "Key Issues Facing Pakistan Today," *Express Tribune*, September 23, 2016.

⁴³ News Desk, "Russia's Joining of CEPEC to Enhance China, Russia and Pakistan Cooperation.," *Pakistan Today*, July 1, 2017, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/01/07/russias-joining-of-cpec-to-enhance-china-russia-and-pakistan-cooperation/>.

⁴⁴ Almas Haider Naqvi and Yasir Masood, "Rejuvenating Pakistan-Russia Relations: Discernable Trends and Future," *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad* 37, no. 4 (2017).

⁴⁵ News Desk, "Russia's Joining of CEPEC to Enhance China, Russia and Pakistan Cooperation.," *Pakistan Today*, July 1, 2017, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/01/07/russias-joining-of-cpec-to-enhance-china-russia-and-pakistan-cooperation/>.

b. Pakistan's Political Concerns and Threats of Isolation

Pakistan has several political concerns that have forced it to find new alliances in the region and specifically with Russia. The strategic alliance with United States and its War on Terror has adversely affected Pakistan's security, political stability and economic situation. Today, Pakistani state faced with numerous challenges is forced to look around for new alliances to deal with all the challenges in order to get out of the quagmire. After three decades of isolation from Russia, it has realized that the partnership with the United States has compromised its security, crippled its economic growth due to perpetual conflict that also affected its relationship with neighbors in the region.⁴⁶ In 2017, Pakistan affirmed through its spokespersons and foreign personals that it needs a 'paradigm shift' in its foreign policy to deal with the rising regional security and economic problems.⁴⁷ Therefore, we have observed that Pakistani diplomatic delegations visited China, Iran, Turkey and Russia to generate support for its stance and role in bringing peace to Afghanistan. In addition, Pakistan was successful in bringing on board Russia and China in BRICS summit and naming Pakistani militant groups as part of their "regional security concern".⁴⁸ Russia recognized Pakistan's efforts on counterterrorist activities, extended its unequivocal support to Pakistan on Afghanistan's problem, and declared it an important player and a stakeholder in regional peace.⁴⁹ Hence, it is very important for Pakistan to align itself to Russia and neutralize the influence of India and United States in the region.

⁴⁶ APP, "Pakistan Wants Recognition of Its Legitimate Security Concern in Region: Asif," *The Nations*, July 10, 2017.

⁴⁷ Umair Jamal, The, "Is a Paradigm Shift in Pakistan's Regional Policy Possible?," *The Diplomat*, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/is-a-paradigm-shift-in-pakistans-regional-policy-possible/>.

⁴⁸ Jamal, Umair, "Is a Paradigm Shift in Pakistan's Regional Policy Possible?," *The Diplomat*, September 14, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/is-a-paradigm-shift-in-pakistans-regional-policy-possible/>.

⁴⁹ News Desk, "Pakistan Warns Trump against Piling up Pressure on Pakistan," *The Express Tribune*, September 24, 2017.

c. Pakistan's Security Concerns

The new regional setting and looming New Cold War has created new challenges including traditional and non-traditional security threats for Pakistan. These problems challenged the preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states. In the absence of a proper mechanism to address these global issues, many problems have become internal matters of the state. In the past, state faced conventional military threats to their security but in contemporary world, apart from conventional threats, states have to contemplate transnational threats to its security too. Today such threats are internationally organized crimes, terrorism, arms escalation, rise of non-state actors used by states as proxies and at times international isolation at different world forums that can be threatening to one's economy and safety. In international relations, it is experiential hazards that determine the conventional security posture of a state, however, in case of Pakistan; geography determines its security posture. Hence, it is observed that geopolitical realities forced Pakistan to evolve policies and undertake actions to ensure its protection. The decisions such as joining hands with United States in Soviet-Afghan war and then War on Terror are reflection of state's geographical compulsion and its survival in the hostile region.⁵⁰

Pakistan's western border is resonating with the fear of militants' trespassing and creating mayhem on both sides. Afghans the main protagonists in the tussle between capitalists and communists have forgotten the Indian standpoint on Soviet invasion and are at loggerhead with Pakistan at several international forums.⁵¹ Apart from the threats emanating from its western border, the eastern border of Pakistan is also not secure. The hardliner and rightist government in India has taken an aggressive military stance and are waging both limited conventional war and isolating Pakistan. Moreover, the aggressive government in the United States started a strategic partnership with India on nuclear and missile technology, defense and trade.⁵² Similarly, United States radical government expressed its displeasure over Pakistan's role in curbing terrorism in the region and threatening Pakistan with serious repercussions.⁵³ Thus, it is pertinent for Pakistan's security to form defense alliances with the former super power to

⁵⁰ Naveed, Arooj, "Outlining Pakistan's Regional Challenges in The 21st Century," *South Asian Voices*, September 16, 2015, <https://southasianvoices.org/outlining-pakistans-regional-challenges-in-the-21st-century/>.

⁵¹ Masood, Talat, "Key Issues Facing Pakistan Today."

⁵² Naveed, Arooj, "Outlining Pakistan's Regional Challenges in The 21st Century," September 16, 2015.

⁵³ Masood, Talat, "Key Issues Facing Pakistan Today."

neutralize threats to its borders. Both the states realize the security threats and are already in the process of signing different defense pacts.

Pakistan - Russia and New Cold War

The incident of 9/11 and United States' policy of War on Terror was a harbinger of changing the strategic scenario of the region, thus forcing many countries to transform their foreign policies. The New Cold War is building; the old alliances are breaking down and new are in the formation process. In fact, the world is already divided into two blocks, however this time it is not an ideological war but based on the convergence of political and economic interests. Moreover, such interests and alliances would be also temporary and at times unpredictable too. Although, economically, Russia is obviously weaker than the West and United States, however its military capabilities, primarily nuclear, are comparable. Today the non-Western pole is not weaker geo-economically, but in some sense even stronger than the West if to regard it as consisting not only of Russia, but of all non-Western Eurasia – or at least those parts of it that gravitate around the growing entente between Russia and China.

The New Cold War is already underway in the form of United States adopting military doctrines giving green light to new ambitious nuclear rearmament programs, openly speaking about the need to contain Russia and China as strategic competitors. There have been also signs of a possible “missile crisis” in Europe. In the information space, the old West's hostility toward China and particularly Russia has reached the level that reminds one of the worst years of the previous Cold War. The campaign against Russia's alleged interference in the American election and the search for Russian “agents of influence” look very much like the McCarthy witch-hunt, an opinion shared even by many American observers. Moreover, the economic sphere, sanctions and countersanctions are becoming a norm. Most of the anti-Russian sanctions are formally linked to the Minsk process. In case of China, Trump administration has started a tariff war. Though the anti-Chinese economic measures have a different legal form (duties rather than

sanctions, although some sanctions are imposed, too). Pakistan and new Trump administration is at loggerhead on WoT.⁵⁴

The precarious security situation and economic problems forced Pakistan to establish relations with Russia. In 2007, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visited Pakistan and renewed bilateral relations. Likewise, army chiefs of both sides also paid visits to each other's countries. In 2011, several incidents in the region brought them together; the killings of two Pakistani by the intelligence agency personnel of United States and later Abbotabad's operation made Pakistan realize that it is a high time to get out of the asymmetrical alliance.⁵⁵ The happenings of 2011, forced Pakistani think tank to think about diversifying its foreign policy options by plummeting its dependence on the United States. In 2012, Pakistani Foreign Minister visited Russia to discuss different subjects of energy, trade and defense sales. The strategic dialogues between Pak-Russia in 2013 provided a major breakthrough for enhancing the bilateral ties. In 2014, through series of such political and economic developments, the bilateral ties shifted into a military cooperation too.⁵⁶ Most of the meetings between the two states emphasized on developing harmonized efforts to combat international terrorism and narco-traffic.

Russia also supported Pakistan's full membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).⁵⁷ Russia's Rostec hi-tech corporation also waved off embargo on delivery of armament and military equipment to Pakistan, which was imposed during Cold War.⁵⁸ Many analysts regard Russian changing policy crucial for its security too. The Crimean issue also forced Russia to start changing its policy towards Pakistan.⁵⁹ In 2015, both the states signed a watershed agreement, the details of which were not shared by both sides. However, Russia starts providing sophisticated military

⁵⁴ Rafiq, Arif, "Pakistan: Russia's New Best Friends?," *The National Interest*, September 27, 2017, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/pakistan-russias-new-best-friend-13945?page=5>.

⁵⁵ Declan Walsh, "A CIA Spy, a Hail of Bullets, Three Killed and a US-Pakistan Diplomatic Row," *The Guardian*, February 20, 2011, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/20/cia-agent-lahore-civilian-deaths>.

⁵⁶ Roy, Rajorshi., "Russia's Military Cooperation Agreement with Pakistan: An Assessment," *Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses*, December 15, 2014, https://idsa.in/idsacomments/RussiasMilitaryCooperationAgreement_rroy_151212.

⁵⁷ Haider, Mateen, "Pakistan, Russia Sign Landmark Defence Deal," *Dawn*, September 20, 2015.

⁵⁸ Haider, Mateen.

⁵⁹ Khan, Ikram Ullah and Waqar, Ifrah, "Pakistan-Russia Relations in the New Age," May 6, 2014.

equipment that can be used for its security. Later in 2016, several military drills and exercises were carried out together on Pak-Afghan border too.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The intricacy of international politics is witnessing the transformation of states' policies leading to the dilution of the old partnerships and building up of new alliances. World is witnessing New Cold War in which United States is losing its support on War on Terror doctrine while Russia is getting closer to the states in Eurasia and South Asia. It is also observed that the two adversaries of the Cold War are again at loggerhead with each other in South Asia, Middle East and Eurasia, however this time Russia is more cautious in evolving its policy. Similarly, the closeness between Russia and Pakistan is unfolding the dynamics of contemporary politics too. Russia understands the importance of geo-strategic position of Pakistan in the political schemes. Moreover, it has deep comprehension of the situation that United States left Pakistan in lurch post-Cold War to deal with the ramifications of Afghan war. In addition, even today Pakistan is fighting with the spin-off Afghan war and growing influence of India in Afghan settlement process and its economy in recession. The building of New Cold War has brought the old foes come closer and if Pakistan strategizes its position properly then it can benefit both politically and economically in the region from Russian partnership.

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⁶⁰ Haider, Mateen, "Pakistan, Russia Sign Landmark Defence Deal."

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